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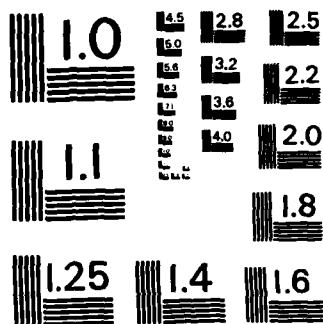
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STUDENT ESSAY

TURKEY: A STRATEGIC ALLY

BY

VICTOR E. STAMEY

16 APRIL 1982

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US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today, the prospects for Turkey to forge a better future and a more positive international image are very solid. The generals who seized power on 12 September 1980 have put the country firmly on the road back to parliamentary government.

In the country, terrorism is under control and political extremism is contained. Consumer goods are plentiful, inflation is going down, more children are in school, and finally the economy is being decentralized. The NATO/Europe link is affirmed and efforts are also under way to cultivate new markets in the Middle East and Africa.

There is no question that Turkey is a long way from being a pure democracy; however, it is also clear that this strategic ally is worth strong backing by the United States.

In this paper, I will enhance the understanding of "Turkey As A Strategic Ally" by looking at relevant aspects of Turkish history, national characteristics, politics and security, and its strategic importance to the world.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

General

There is abundant evidence of Turkish history dating back to the seventh millennium B.C.. However, I shall bypass this rich and exciting sequence of early history and concentrate on the significant aspects of more modern times. Beginning with the Ottoman Empire, I believe it is important to have an appreciation of certain historical events to more fully understand many of the characteristics of this new nation in an old land.

The Ottoman Empire

During the 1300s, the mighty Ottoman Empire began and endured for over 600 years through the reign of thirty-six sultans. At its height in the mid-1500s, it covered all the Balkan Peninsula, much of the Middle East, and parts of Hungary, Northern Africa, and Russia.¹ Many of the European powers actually were very concerned that the Turks would overrun all of Europe.

In 1453, the Byzantine imperial city of Constantinople was captured by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II. He renamed the city Istanbul and made it the capital of the Ottoman Empire.² Eventhough the Empire inherited many Byzantine institutions, it functioned basically within the framework of Islamic ideology and Turkish customs. Only foreigners called

the Empire "Turkish." The rulers and the civil and military ruling classes generally considered themselves to be "Ottomans." This vast empire clearly had Turkish roots and was built on Islamic foundations, but from the beginning it was a heterogeneous concoction of ethnic groups and religious creeds. A Muslim was simply a Muslim regardless of language or ethnic background. The Turks in the empire were regarded as "Turkic-speaking Sunni Muslims."³

Many references date 1566 as the beginning of the empire's decline; however, it was not until 1699 and the Treaty of Carlowitz that a significant territorial loss occurred. The empire lost a six-year war against Russia in 1774 and was forced to allow Russian ships through the straits that link the Black Sea with the Mediterranean. In 1783, the Crimea was lost to Russia. The decline witnessed a breakdown of the empire's governmental machinery, including the military. The seventeen sultans from 1566 to 1789, with few exceptions, were men of little ability.⁴ The fourth war of the century against Russia was lost in 1792. The Black Sea was no longer a Turkish lake. The Red Sea was also lost as British shippers were docking at Suez.

The succession of defeats confirmed that the Ottomans were no longer one of the greatest European powers. Europe's fear of being overrun by the Turks disappeared. "The Sick Man of Europe," as the Ottoman Empire came to be called, lost more territory during the 1800s.⁵ France, Great Britain, and Russia sided with the Greek nationalists in a revolt against Ottoman rule in 1821. The Treaty of Adrianople ended the fighting in 1829 and acknowledged the independence of Greece. Algeria was lost to France in 1830, and Tunisia in 1881. Great Britain took the Island of Cyprus in 1878 and Egypt in 1882.

In view of the diminishing fortunes of the empire during the eighteenth century, the Ottomans realized that reforms were needed. The rising prosperity of Western Europe and the increasing strength of Russia definitely tilted the balance of power in favor of the Christian powers.⁶ Since the west, including Russia, had gained superiority in arms, the Ottomans decided that it would be necessary to begin the process of westernization in a small way. The military was reorganized and the educational system was improved. Turkey's first constitution was adopted in 1876. It provided for representative government and granted the people various freedoms. Sultan Abdulhamid II, 1878-1909, came to the throne, set the constitution aside, and ruled as a dictator. The government became increasingly violent and religious persecution began to spread.

The Young Turks

The repressive policies of Abdulhamid fostered tremendous disaffection. In 1889, a secret organization called "The Society for Union and Progress" was formed by two groups of students at the Army School of Medicine.⁷ Many similar groups of officers and students sprang up outside of Istanbul.

Young army officers, whose professional training brought them into contact with European ideas and technical development, made up the core of the opposition. Mustafa Kemal (later known as Ataturk), was one of the organizers. In 1907, Ataturk's group merged with other nationalist reform organizations to form the secret Committee of Union and Progress.⁸ This group became known as the Young Turks. The main goals of the group were to restore the 1876 Constitution and to develop a homogeneous nation through greater government centralization under a parlia-

mentary regime.

An army revolt led by the Young Turks in 1908 forced Abdulhamid to restore constitutional government. After an unsuccessful counter-revolution by the sultan, the Young Turks made him give up the throne in 1909.

The new government was threatened by both the traditionalists and foreign powers who took advantage of political instability to take portions of the empire. Soon after the revolution in 1908, Bulgaria declared its independence, and Austria seized Bosnia. Italy took Libya in 1912. Crete was surrendered to Greece in 1913. Another coup in 1913 overthrew the liberal government and the most authoritarian elements of the Young Turk movement gained full control. By 1914, the empire had lost all of its European territory except Thrace.

Growth of political liberalism did not result from the Young Turk revolution. A military dictatorship soon emerged with the power concentrated in a triumvirate. Ataturk had dissociated himself from the movement, because he was convinced that the military should stay out of politics and the administration of government, once the revolutionary aims had been achieved.

World War I

In an attempt to regain lost territory, in 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered World War I with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Within six months, the Ottoman army of 800,000 men was engaged in a four front war.

An offensive on the Russian front in the winter of 1915 went badly for the empire and a counteroffensive drove Ottoman forces back to Lake Van. Armenian units had assisted the Russians and as the Ottoman Army retreated, a massive deportation of as many as two million Armenians was

undertaken to remove them from Anatolia.

In the spring of 1915, British, French and other Allied troops tried to gain control of the straits. This became known as the Gallipoli campaign and was the most successful Turkish operation of the war. Ataturk, a colonel, made his reputation as a capable and tireless division commander. The allied forces finally accepted defeat and withdrew in January 1916, and Ataturk became a national hero.

Ottoman resistance was exhausted. The Young Turk triumvirate escaped to exile in Germany. Mehmed VI sued for peace and signed an Allied-dictated armistice on 30 October 1918.

Ataturk

After victory in World War I, the allies wanted to break up the Ottoman Empire. During the war a series of agreements had been negotiated that not only dismantled the Ottoman Empire, but also divided that part of Anatolia which Turkish nationalists viewed as the Turkish nation.⁹

Allied forces occupied Istanbul and the straits. In May 1919, a Greek force landed at the port of Izmir and advanced into the country. There was wide spread resentment by the Turks that the Ottoman government could not defend their homeland. A nationalist movement was quickly organized by Mustafa Kemal. With his leadership, a nationalist Congress met in Sivas to form a new government. In April 1920, the Congress organized the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara and elected Kemal as Assembly President.

In August 1920, the sultan's government signed the Treaty of Sevres with the allies which reduced Turkey to Istanbul and a portion of Anatolia. Because of the treaty, the sultan's popularity further

declined among Turks, while the power of Kemal and the nationalist increased.

What is known as the War of Independence lasted three years. Some military successes against the Greek invasion also brought an improvement in Turkey's diplomatic situation. France and Italy withdrew from Anatolia by October 1921. A treaty was signed with Russia which established the boundary between the two countries. In September 1922, the nationalist forces, led by Kemal, drove the Greeks out of Turkey. The Grand National Assembly abolished the office of sultan. Turkey became the only defeated power in World War I to negotiate with the Allies as an equal and to influence the provisions of the treaty. The treaty of Lausanne, signed in 1923, established Turkey's borders about where they are today.¹⁰

On 29 October 1923, the Grand National Assembly proclaimed Turkey to be a republic. Mustafa Kemal was named as the first president and Ankara was designated as the capital.

Under Mustafa Kemal, sweeping social political and economic changes took place in the 1920s and 1930s. All Turks were required to choose a family name and the Grand National Assembly gave Kemal his surname - Ataturk, which means "Father of the Turks."¹¹ All distinctive titles were abolished. The fez was outlawed. Islam and Islamic functionaries were excluded from any role in the government. The Latin alphabet was adopted. New legal codes, modeled on European lines, made important changes in the laws governing women and the family. In 1924, the Grand National Assembly adopted a new constitution.

Ataturk established two major objectives of equal priority, national security and modernization of Turkey. He felt that these objectives were contingent on order and tranquility in Turkey and the

existence of peace in the external world. In establishing direction for his country he said, "He who desires peace should be prepared for war."¹²

Foreign policy under Ataturk was careful and conservative. In December 1925, a treaty of friendship and neutrality was concluded with the Soviet Union. Friendship treaties with fifteen other states were concluded in 1925. Formal diplomatic relations with the United States were established on 17 February 1927. Turkey joined the League of Nations on 6 July 1932.¹³ One of his greatest international successes occurred in July 1936 with the signing of the Montreux Convention which allowed Turkish control and remilitarization of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus Strait.¹⁴

Ataturk was president until he died on 10 November 1938. After Ataturk's death, his chief Lieutenant, Ismet Inonu was elected president.

World War II

Turkey viewed the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact of 23 August 1939 as a threat to the country's security. In October 1939, Turkey entered into a treaty of mutual assistance with Britain and France.

As a precautionary measure to initial German successes, a non-aggression treaty was concluded with Germany on 18 June 1941.¹⁵ However, at no time were German forces allowed in Turkish land, sea or air space. Turkey was able to maintain a course of armed neutrality until nearly the end of the war. Turkey broke off diplomatic relations with Germany on 2 August 1944 and declared war on 23 February 1945 when defeat was imminent. Turkey became one of the fifty-one original members of the United Nations Organization the same year.¹⁶

After World War II

At the end of World War II, Turkey was still in a single party political system. The Republican People's Party (RPP) was in power and unopposed.¹⁷ In 1946, the Democratic Party (DP) was formed and other parties quickly followed.¹⁸ In 1947, under the Truman Doctrine, the United States began providing millions of dollars in economic and military assistance to Turkey. For this assistance, the United States was allowed to construct and operate military bases on Turkish soil.¹⁹

The elections of 1950 brought an end to the RPP's 27-years of control as the DP won convincingly. To many people's surprise, the transfer of power went smoothly and Celal Bayar became president.²⁰ The democrats encouraged foreign investment and wanted less government control of the economy. During the next decade, the country went heavily into debt and economic problems became severe. Only a few weeks after Bayar became president, he sent a contingent of 5,000 Turkish troops to fight in South Korea under the United Nations Command. This action was to demonstrate Turkey's strong desire for solidarity with the west.²¹ Both Turkey and Greece were admitted to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 18 February 1952.²² After two NATO Council meetings in December 1957, Turkey consented to the stationing of nuclear weapons on her soil.²³

By 1960, the armed forces believed that the DP government had strayed too far from the basic political principals of Ataturk. On 27 May 1960, the army intervened and disestablished the DP. General Cemal Gursel set up a provisional government and a new constitution was written, which as the years went by, proved too complicated to be operable. In late 1961, civilian government was restored and Gursel was elected President by the RPP.

During the 1960s, Turkey and Greece came very close to war over the Cyprus issue. In 1964 and 1967, there was fighting between the island's, Turkish minority and Greek majority. Both nations threatened to intervene before outside negotiators arranged a settlement.

The elections of 1965 and 1969 were won by the Justice Party (JP).²⁴ High taxes, inflation, land tenure, education, and political unrest troubled the JP government during the late 1960s. A wave of terrorist incidents swept the nation. In March 1971, the government was reorganized under direct pressure from the military.²⁵

The decade of the 1970s left the nation in turmoil. Governments switched on a regular basis from the RPP's extreme left to JP and DP on the extreme right. Prime Ministers Suleyman Demirel of the JP and Bulent Ecevit of the RPP evolved as the dominant political figures, but neither was successful in providing effective leadership or positive direction for the nation.²⁶

In July and August 1974, the Cyprus issue erupted again. At this time, tensions between Turkey and Greece were already high because of mutually exclusive claims by both to the same 10,000 square kilometers of seabed in the North Aegean Sea, said to contain large deposits of oil.²⁷ Turkish forces were sent to Cyprus and quickly took control of about 40 percent of northern portion of the Island.²⁸ After this defacto partition, a solution was left to negotiations which are still ongoing. Relations between Turkey and the United States became very strained over this incident.²⁹

The 1970s closed and 1980 began with the Turkish nation in a precarious situation. In Ankara, the productive work of Parliament and the government was virtually paralyzed.³⁰ Terrorism was rampant on both the

left and right sides of the political spectrum. Many observers felt that the country was on the verge of civil war. It was obvious to most observers that some drastic action was needed to get the nation headed in the right direction once again.

CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER III

NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The People

Today, Turkey has a population of about 47,000,000 people with projections for over 66 million by the year 2000. Approximately 90 percent of the people are descendents of an Asian people called Turks who migrated from central Russia and Northern Mongolia during the ninth century.¹ Turkey's largest minority group is Kurds.² There are more than three million Kurds, most of whom live in the mountainous regions of Southeast Anatolia. Also there are several smaller minority groups. Over one-half million Arabs, most of whom are farmers, live near the Syrian border. There are more than 100,000 Caucasians whose ancestors came from the Caucasus Mountains region of Russia. The Caucasians live in the Black Sea area. Also small Greek, Jewish and Armenian communities are in the Istanbul area. Other very small minorities of Azerbaijanis, Turkiz, Lazzes and Georgians also exist.³

The 1975 census found that almost 92 percent of the population claim Turkish as their primary language. Most of the minorities are bilingual in their own language and Turkish; however, many Kurds speak only Kurdish.⁴ Assimilation of the minorities has progressed very well, with the possible exception of a minority among the Kurds who speak of Kurdish nationalism. This Kurdish situation is certainly not a major

concern at this time, but it bears watching in the future.

Racially, the Turks are more mixed than the English, though not as much as Americans. They think of themselves more as Europeans, rather than Asians. The Turks have looked westward ever since Ataturk began to westernize the republic almost 50 years ago.⁵

Almost 99 percent of the Turkish people are Moslem.⁶ Ethnic Turks are predominantly Sunni Moslem; however, between six and eight million are Shiite. Bear in mind that Turkey has no state religion and that religious freedom is guaranteed by the constitution. The question of whether or not Turkish society should be organized on a worldly or religious basis remains one of the most controversial domestic issues in Turkey today.⁷ Among the rural masses, religion is still the main source of their identity.⁸

Turkey is still a rural society with approximately 57 percent of the population living in the countryside. The population density averages 52 persons per square kilometer with the greatest density in European Turkey and the coastal regions of the Marmara, Aegean and Black Seas. The major cities are Istanbul (2,600,000), Ankara (2,000,000), Izmir (750,000), Adana (700,000), and Bursa (500,000).⁹

Significant progress has been made in education. This will continue to enhance Turkey's modernization efforts. It is estimated that over 55 percent of the people can read and write.¹⁰ In 1975, the literacy percentages for men and women were 74.8 and 48.1 respectively.¹¹ Popular demand for education is very great because it is considered the chief means of social advancement. Approximately 20 percent of the annual budget goes to public education, but rising costs and a lack of qualified teachers inhibit progress, particularly in rural areas.¹² By law, all children are required to attend primary school for five years,

or until they reach age 15. The law is not vigorously enforced, particularly in the rural areas.

Economic Status

Since 1923, the Turkish economy gradually expanded and diversified. The economy is developing, but not without difficulties.

A relatively consistent development strategy has been followed which is intended to modernize the country in a system of diverse economy. Industrialization and self-sufficiency have received the main emphasis, but integration and development of the outlying regions has also been stressed.¹³

The country has followed a series of five-year plans, of which the fourth is now in effect, as part of a long-range strategy projected to 1995.¹⁴ The plans are extremely comprehensive, covering social as well as economic direction. Under government direction, the number of factories has increased from 118 in 1923 to more than 30,000 today. Still agriculture remains the major economic activity, providing jobs for approximately 67 percent of the work force. Conversely farm output accounts for only about 22 percent of the value of goods and services produced. Industrial production employs only about 8 percent of the workers, but the value of output equals that of agriculture.¹⁵

The government owns all communications systems, railroads, airports and major utilities. Further, it controls steel production, the mining industry, the nation's forests, most of the banking system, and about one million acres of farmland. Most farms and small manufacturing and construction companies are privately owned.¹⁶

By 1980, the economy was in deep trouble. Since the 1970s, inflation had been 50 to 80 percent per year.¹⁷ GNP growth was only

about one percent in 1979. Bankruptcy was avoided only because many governments, international agencies, and private banks agreed to rescheduling the country's foreign debt, estimated between 14 and 17 billion dollars. Inflation and unemployment were very high; terrorism was increasing; and some observers felt that Turkey's democratic institutions were in jeopardy.¹⁸

Today, after a change of government in September 1980, prospects for the economy look better, even though, Turkey's most urgent problem remains to be its difficult economic situation. Terrorism has been curbed, strikes and lockouts have ended, and production has greatly increased.¹⁹ Inflation has been reduced to 30%; export earnings have increased by more than 50 percent; savings are at unprecedented levels; a major tax reform package was approved; new jobs are being created; applications totaling over \$200 million for foreign investment have been approved. On the negative side, in December 1981, the European Economic Community (EEC) suspended payments on planned aid because of political reasons.²⁰ In 1982, Turkey has asked for \$300 million in aid from the United States for economic projects.²¹ In a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, said, "A sizeable economic support funds program is planned for Turkey as we continue to respond to that country's economic needs in cooperation with other donors."²² The Washington Post recently reported that the Reagan administration may include an increase of close to \$100 million over existing foreign aid levels in the proposed 1983 budget for assistance to Turkey.²³ Efforts are underway to cultivate new markets in the Middle East. In 1981 about 38 percent of the total exports went to Islamic countries.²⁴ The EEC countries account for about 55 percent of

imports and exports. Approximately ten percent of the imports and five percent of the exports are with countries of Eastern Europe and the USSR.²⁵

Turkey is one of seven countries in the world which is self sufficient in feeding itself.²⁶ Natural resource potential for iron, ore, salt, colemanite, lead, gold, silver, tin, bauxite, sulphur, mercury, meercshaum, petroleum, coal, lignite, copper, chrome, and manganese are yet to be exploited.²⁷ All of these things add up to an enormous economic potential, but the challenges to meet this potential are also enormous.

Geography

Relative to most European countries, Turkey is large in size and small in population. The land mass is approximately 780,000 square kilometers (302,160 square miles) with 97 percent in Asia (the Anatolian Plateau) and three percent in Europe (the hill country of Thrace). Larger than any European state outside the Soviet Union, it is more than twice the size of Germany and about three times as large as the United Kingdom. In the Middle East, Turkey is exceeded in area only by Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt. The country is basically rectangular in shape being approximately 1000 miles east to west and 500 miles north to south. This shape has presented some development difficulties, particularly in the remote eastern sections.²⁸

Turkey is bounded by six countries (Greece, Bulgaria, Soviet Union, Iran, Iraq, and Syria) and approximately 8000 kilometers of sea coasts on the Mediterranean Sea, Aegean Sea, Turkish Straits, Sea of Marmara, the Dardanelles, the Bosphorus, and the Black Sea. The country has many European characteristics, but it is tied to Asia by its long

history and therefore, has an important place in both continents.²⁹ Geopolitically, Turkey is in a strategically important position and is a valuable element of balance in this part of the world.

There are several large saltwater lakes and numerous rivers in Turkey. During the country's hot, dry summers, most of the rivers dry up. In the spring, these dried up rivers can become torrents as waters from the melting snows pour down from the mountains and overflow the banks.³⁰

Turkey can be divided into eight land regions: (1) the Northern Plains, (2) the Western Valleys, (3) the Southern Plains, (4) the Western Plateau, (5) the Eastern Plateau, (6) the Northern Mountains, (7) the Southern Mountains, and (8) the Mesopotamian Lowlands.³¹

- The Northern Plains cover Thrace and extend along the Black Sea coast of Anatolia. Thrace's gently rolling grasslands make it an important farming and grazing region. Along the Black Sea coast, farmers raise corn, fruits, nuts and tobacco. The region contains the cities of Istanbul and Edirne and is densely populated.

- The Western Valleys are broad, fertile river valleys along the Aegean Sea coast. The region produces barley, corn, olives, tobacco, and wheat. The crop value of this region exceeds all others. This area is densely populated, and has important port facilities at Izmir.

- The Southern Plains are a narrow strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea. Many crops, including cereal grains, citrus fruits, cotton, and olives grow in the region's rich soil; however, farmers must irrigate their fields during the hot, dry summer. The cities of Adana and Antalya and the relatively undeveloped port at Iskenderun are in this region.³²

- The Western Plateau, a region of highlands and scattered river valleys, extends across Central Anatolia. The region receives little rainfall. Farmers raise barley and wheat in the river valleys and wherever irrigation water is available. Goats, sheep, and other livestock graze on uncultivated land. The region varies in altitude from 600 to 1,200 meters west to east. Winters are cold with heavy, lasting snows, and villages may be isolated by severe snowstorms. The capital city of Ankara is in this region.

- The Eastern Plateau is a rugged area of towering mountains and barren plains which extends from the Western Plateau to Turkey's eastern border. The Taurus and Pontic Mountains meet in this region. Ararat, the country's highest point (5,185 meters), is in this region near both the Iranian and Russian borders. The Euphrates River begins here and Lake Van, Turkey's largest lake, is in this region. There is a severe climate and winter temperatures that have been recorded at minus 39.6 degrees Celsius. Most of the region's people are nomadic herders.

-The Northern Mountains, or Pontic Mountains, rise between the Northern Plains and the Anatolian Plateau. Only a few roads and railroads connect the plateau with the Black Sea. The region has a steep rocky coast, and rivers run through gorges of the coastal ranges. All available areas, including mountain slopes wherever not too steep, are put to use. The region has a mild, damp climate favoring commercial farming. Turkey's heavy industry center is in the western part of this region.

- The Southern Mountains consist of the Taurus Mountains and several smaller ranges on the southern edge of the Anatolian Plateau. These mountains almost completely cut off the plateau from the Mediter-

anean. The Tigris River originates in this region.

- The Mesopotamian Lowlands are fertile plains and river valleys adjacent to Syria and Iraq in Southeastern Anatolia. Cereal grains and fruits grow well in the region's rich soil.

Turkey's climate varies greatly from one region to another. Generally, Thrace and the south and west coasts of Anatolia have mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers. Temperatures along the Aegean in the summer often rise above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius). The Black Sea coast has cooler summers with an average temperature of about 72 degrees Fahrenheit (22 degrees Celsius). Yearly rainfall averages from 20-30 inches along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts to more than 100 inches near the Black Sea. Northeast Turkey has mild summers, but extremely cold winters. Southeastern Turkey and the interior of Anatolia have cold winters with heavy snowstorms. Summers are hot, windy, and extremely dry.³³

As of 1978, Turkey had about 77,920 miles of roads, of which about a fourth are paved. The national government owns and runs about 6,109 miles of railroad track.³⁴ About 30 cities in Turkey are served by the Turkish Airlines. All international flights go out of either Ankara or Izmir.³⁵ There are many excellent natural harbors in Turkey. The primary commercial ports are at Istanbul, Izmir, Bandirma and Mersin.³⁶

CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER IV

POLITICS AND SECURITY

Government

The Turkish republic was organized as a nationalist, democratic and secular state, providing for human rights, the rule of law and social justice.¹ Major entities of the national government are the President, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, a legislature called the Grand National Assembly, and a court system.² All Turkish citizens who are 21 years and older may vote.

Even though the Turkish system provides for a parliamentary form of government, the office of president has historically been very powerful.³ The President is head of state, commander in chief of the armed forces, and the presiding officer at cabinet meetings. He is elected by the Grand National Assembly from its members for a single seven-year term. Turkish presidents have been particularly active in foreign policy matters.

By structure, the Prime Minister and Cabinet make up the power center of Turkish government. The Prime Minister is selected by the President from the members of the legislature. Then the Prime Minister chooses 20-25 members from the legislature to form a cabinet called the Council of Ministers.⁴ In recent coalition periods, the small ideological parties have sometimes taken advantage of the practice of giving

cabinet ministers almost unlimited appointment powers in their respective ministries. Some observers considered "infiltration" of ministries recently held by radical right-wing parties in the national front cabinets to be one of the primary causes for the governments operational stagnation in early 1980.⁵

The Grand National Assembly makes laws, ratifies treaties, and has the power to declare war. It has two houses, the National Assembly and the Senate of the Republic. The National Assembly has 450 members, elected by the people to four-year terms. The Senate has 150 members elected by the people and 15 appointed by the President. These members serve six-year terms. Former members of the National Unity Committee and former presidents hold lifetime seats.⁶

There are three major judicial bodies in Turkey: the Court of Cassation, Council of State and the Constitutional Court. The first two handle commercial disputes, criminal trials, and administrative matters brought forth by the public and civil servants. The Constitutional Court, created by the 1961 Constitution, determines the legality of laws passed by the legislature. Some of the issues which have come before it have had political implications and the constitutional court has become a very controversial institution.⁷

Local government in Turkey does not have a great deal of autonomy. Most of their activities are subject to close monitoring and approval by the central government.⁸ Turkey has 67 provinces. Each province has a governor appointed by the President and a Province General Council elected by the province's people. Provinces are divided into counties, districts, municipalities (communities of 2,000 or more persons), and villages.⁹

At the beginning of 1980, Turkey had two major political parties,

the Republican Peoples Party (RPP) and the Justice Party (JP). The RPP is a left-wing organization which supported government guidance of the economy and opposes a return to traditional Islamic practices.¹⁰ The JP is the main right-wing group that wanted to decrease the governments direction of the economy and to relax the laws against traditional religious customs.¹¹ There were also several minor parties with widely differing objectives and programs.

September 1980 Through Today

Prior to 12 September 1980, the situation in Turkey was extremely grave. Throughout the country, there were approximately 20 political murders everyday.¹² The Parliament had been blocked for months over the election of a new president. At the end of his seven year term, President Fahri Koruturk had retired on 6 April 1980. After over 100 ballots, the supporters of Mr. Suleyman Demirel (JP) and Mr. Bulent Ecevit (RPP) were so evenly balanced that Koruturk's successor remained unchosen in September 1980.¹³ Other difficulties included at least 1,300 bills being pigeonholed by the legislature, the state budget was facing a deficit of \$5 billion, and the rate of inflation was into three digit figures.¹⁴ Near anarchy reigned as both left-wing and right-wing terrorists had killed over 5,000 people in the past two years.¹⁵

On 12 September 1980, the Turkish armed forces, headed by General Kenan Evren, took the reins of the government as a last resort to avert national disaster.¹⁶ The Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Sukru Elekdag, said, "The military takeover was executed to preserve and revitalize democracy as well as safeguarding human rights."¹⁷ The situation in Turkey had been so bad that the takeover was far from unexpected. Many observers had questioned why the military was so

reluctant to take action sooner.¹⁸

Execution of the takeover has been described as a textbook model. In approximately 12 hours, the operation was over, without a drop of blood being shed. General Evren announced that he and the four service commanders would "temporarily" rule the country and that all political activity was suspended.¹⁹ Shortly after the takeover, General Evren as the Head of State promised responsible order, a new constitution, and continuity in foreign and economic policy. The nation rejoiced after the overthrow. It was even favorably received in the west and as Time magazine later reported, "The pall of fear is lifting in Turkey."²⁰

Since the military seized power over 19 months ago, considerable progress has been made. Even the deposed former Prime Ministers, Demirel and Ecevit, acknowledged that Turkey is firmly on the road back to parliamentary government.²¹ General Evren has publicly stated that elections will be held by early 1984. A Consultative Assembly is now writing a new constitution which is expected to strengthen the presidency and make provisions for a strong two party political system which discourages splinter groups.²² As Joseph Kraft noted in the Washington Post, "Political extremism, both Islamic and left-wing is contained. Goods are plentiful, inflation is going down and a long-overdue liberalization of the economy is underway. The NATO tie is staunchly affirmed, though efforts are also underway to cultivate new markets in the Middle East and, if possible to compose differences with Greece."²³ The United States Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, was quoted as saying, "We admire the way in which order and law have been restored in Turkey."²⁴

As might be expected, not all has been smooth sailing for the

military regime. Since the takeover, many European Community Leaders have urged the military rulers to accelerate the return to democracy as pledged. The European community has postponed \$650 million in aid to Turkey because of the imprisonment of Mr. Bulent Ecevit.²⁵ Much criticism has also come from the European Common Market countries because of the 30,000 detentions for politically motivated offenses, which are acknowledged by Turkish authorities.²⁶ Socialist delegations in the European community have pressed for Turkey's expulsion because of its military regime.²⁷ The Washington Post reports, "The Soviet Union has mounted a campaign of heavy pressure on Turkey with a flurry of propaganda assaults on its military government and open expressions of diplomatic support for the new Socialist Government of Greece in its dispute with Turkey."²⁸

Military Forces

Traditionally the Turkish armed forces have held a place of distinction and represented a national institution upon which the people could place their confidence and trust. As a normal matter of course, the military is not directly involved in political matters; however, military leaders consider it a sacred responsibility to be guardians of the Turkish model of democracy.²⁹ The military continues to be one of the best channels for upward mobility and a major source of recruitment of the nation's best talent.

The defense policy of Turkey is, "to protect the independence, sovereignty and national integrity of the Republic of Turkey against threats and attacks within the framework of her bilateral and multilateral treaties while fulfilling her obligations and liabilities to those treaties."³⁰ Turkish armed forces total over 689,000 personnel in

the land (including Gendarmerie), Naval and Air Force Commands which are attached to the Office of the Chief of General Staff.³¹ Conscription of 20 year old males for a 20 month period fills the enlisted ranks of all services.³²

Turkey's land forces have 470,000 people (420,000 conscripts) organized into four armies consisting of one armor division, two mechanized divisions, 14 infantry divisions and 24 separate brigades (armor, mechanized, infantry, airborne and commando).³³ Weapons and equipment include four Honest John battalions, 3500 tanks (M-47 and M-48), 2900 Armored Personnel Carriers (M-113, M-59, and M-2/-3), and guided missiles (LAW, Cobra, TOW).³⁴ The land forces also have 273 aircraft and helicopters of different types.³⁵ About half the divisions and brigades are below strength and much of the equipment is old and in poor condition according to sources at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. One army corps of two infantry divisions (20,000 personnel) is in Cyprus where Turkish armed forces intervened in 1974.³⁶

The Gendarmerie General Command is responsible, in peacetime, for securing public order, providing security in the countryside and preventing smuggling of goods through the borders. During wartime, it supports the land and Naval Commands.³⁷ There are 120,000 soldiers organized into provincial Gendarmerie Regiment Commands and three Mobile Brigades.³⁸

The Turkish Navy has 46,000 personnel (36,000 Conscripts), including one marine brigade of 5,000.³⁹ It has 14 submarines, 14 ex-U.S. destroyers, two frigates, 21 fast patrol boats, 49 coastal patrol boats, 26 minesweepers, 10 mine layers, 77 amphibious ships/boats, one depot ship and five tankers.⁴⁰ The command also has one anti-submarine warfare squadron with 25 aircraft and six helicopters.⁴¹ Five naval

bases are located at Golcuk, Istanbul, Izmir, Eregli, and Iskenderun.

Turkish Air Forces have 53,000 personnel (33,000 Conscripts), a fleet of 325 combat aircraft,⁴² and eight surface to air squadrons with 96 Nike Hercules. The fighter and reconnaissance fleets are made up of F-104's, F-4's, F-100's, F-5's, and F-84's. Transport aircraft are a mixture of C-130's, Transall C-160's, C-47's, C-54's, Viscount 794's, several smaller craft such as Cessna 421's, and 21 helicopters.⁴³ Observers say that the Turks are good pilots, but overhaul and maintenance are serious weaknesses in the force. The command has 16 fighter, ground attack squadrons, two inteceptor squadrons, two reconnaissance squadrons, five transport squadrons, and one training command.⁴⁴

Turkey's mobilization potential is significant. All persons discharged from the active forces remain in the reserves until age 48. Mobilization exercises are practiced regularly and some observers estimate that half a million people can be mobilized in 72 hours.⁴⁵

One of Turkey's major concerns is the modernization of its aging military equipment. The U.S. Secretary of Defense Weinberger recently said, "a lot needs to be done" to modernize Turkey's armed forces.⁴⁶ In testimony before the House of Armed Services Committee last year, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Rogers, said that the modernization of Turkey's armed forces to bring them up to NATO standards would require \$5-6 billion over the next ten years.⁴⁷

Assistance in the modernization effort has come from several sources. In Fiscal Year 1982, the U.S. State Department proposed a total military assistance program of \$403.5 million.⁴⁸ The principal users of these credits would be for the purchase of new fighter air-

craft, tank conversion kits (M48A1/2's to A5's), antitank missiles, command and control equipment, and a ship mounted harpoon missile system.⁴⁹ The Federal Republic of Germany is providing DM 560 million in grant military assistance for Turkey.⁵⁰ Additionally, several NATO countries have provided military equipment to Turkey at low or no cost as it is being phased out of their own inventory.⁵¹ It is expected that the Reagan administration will recommend increases in military aid for fiscal year 1983.

Foreign Policy

The first 50 years of foreign policy for the Turkish Republic was relatively consistent and based on a realistic defense of national interests.⁵² Ataturk proclaimed and his successors have repeatedly stated, "We want peace at home and peace in the world." Turkish Leaders have also proclaimed that, "he who desires peace should be prepared for war."⁵³

A major policy goal of the Republic has been to become a member of the European community of nations and an equal in status, civilization, and prestige.⁵⁴ The nation has clearly followed a course of alignment with the West and in particular the United States. This is not to imply that all has been smooth sailing, but simply to define the direction of policy.

Since 18 February 1952, Turkey has been a member of NATO.⁵⁵ Foreign policy of the new government lead by General Evren has reaffirmed Turkey's unequivocal commitment to the West, while sensibly seeking to maintain good relations with her Muslim neighbors; abiding by agreements with the International Monetary Fund and honor all existing treaty obligations; and continuation of the goal for eventual membership

in the European Economic Community.⁵⁶

In October 1980, Turkey dropped its objections to Greece's return to the military wing of NATO and indicated a willingness to discuss the Cyprus issue and the Aegean issue with Greece. Since the Greek left-wing Andreas Papandreu government came to power in 1981, positions on both sides have hardened and no one is certain of future courses of events in this area.⁵⁷ Another complicating factor is that the Soviet Union has abandoned its traditionally evenhanded stance toward Greek-Turkish disputes and is taking a distinctly pro-Greek position.⁵⁸

Foreign policy agreement between Turkey and the United States is also improved with the current government of Turkey. In November 1981, at the Madrid Review Conference on security and cooperation in Europe, Turkey's Foreign Minister, Ilter Turkmen, reaffirmed the regime's conviction that "detente is indivisible", thus aligning Turkey with President Reagan's views on the central issue of world affairs.⁵⁹ Also in November 1981, at the United Nations General Assembly debate on Afghanistan, the Turkish Permanent Representative, Mr. Coskun Kirca, warned the Russians that their actions were endangering global peace and security.⁶⁰ On 29 March 1981, the United States and Turkey signed a defense and economic cooperation agreement which now is being implemented smoothly.

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CHAPTER V

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

Geopolitical

Turkey is a nation at the crossroads of continents. Much of its past and present importance in world affairs can be attributed to its critical geographical position. Situated in the center of a continental triangle composed of Asia, Europe and Africa, Turkey has an important strategic location from where the East-West and North-South axis can be controlled. As a friendly power located between the Middle East, the Soviet Union, and the Balkan States, her strategic importance cannot be denied.

The Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles present a special situation in the strategic position of Turkey. Were it not for these sea passages, the Black Sea would be land locked. Of course all nations have rights of passage during times of peace, but in times of conflict they could easily be closed and controlled by Turkish forces.¹

NATO

After 30 years as the anchor of NATO's southern flank, the strategic importance of Turkey has not diminished. Turkey guards the European land approach of the eastern Mediterranean and presents a formidable obstacle in the path of any Soviet expansion designs. Control of the Bosphorus and Turkish Straits by the Turks clearly limits the

Soviet naval surge capability into the Mediterranean, in time of crisis, and enhances Allied lines of communication in the area.

Warsaw Pact forces opposing the southern flank of NATO make up a major land, naval and air threat. Former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown reported to the U.S. Congress that there are 36 Warsaw Pact Divisions on the southern flank which threaten Turkey in particular.²

The ongoing disputes between Greece and Turkey are of great concern in NATO. Settlement of the Cyprus and Aegean Sea issues does not appear feasible in the near term.³ The new Greek Socialist government has clearly hardened its positions on differences with Turkey. The Soviet Union is taking a distinctly pro-Greek position.⁴ With all of this turmoil, the one thing that is certain is that NATO's southern flank would be seriously weakened without Greece. Some progress in solving these problems has been made: Turkey and Greece have reopened some air routes over the Aegean, the U.S. aid embargo of 1974-1978 has been lifted, and Turkey has allowed the U.S. to resume operations at the American in-country facilities again.⁵

NATO has established combined staffs in Izmir to assume control of allied forces in this area in case of war and during NATO exercises. Since 1978, LANDSOUTHEAST (for ground forces) and 6th Allied Tactical Air Force has both been commanded by Turkish generals with American general officer deputy commanders.⁶

The United States and Republic of Turkey signed a Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement DECA in March 1980. This agreement symbolizes the end of an unfortunate period of tension between two NATO allies. Many US facilities in Turkey have been reactivated and important intelligence gathering activities are back in operation.

On 12 September 1980, after the takeover, the military quickly

reaffirmed Turkey's loyalty to NATO. Turkey has earmarked the equivalent of 15 land divisions, 13 fighter attack squadrons and the Navy for assignment to NATO in time of war. A major concern at this time is the modernization of Turkish forces. U.S. officials agree that modernization must be accomplished for Turkey to effectively carry out its full NATO responsibilities.

Most experts agree that the Central Front and NATO as a whole cannot be defended if either the southern or northern flank is inadequately protected.

Middle East

Since the emergence of the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s as a political and military factor in the Third World, particularly the Arab Middle East, Turkey's location unavoidably places it across the avenues for the projection of Soviet power to the South.⁷ Because a part of Turkey is situated in the Middle East, military planners must give due attention to the possibility of threats arising out of the area as a result of the instability and turmoil which characterize the region.

Turkey's strategic role is more than one of military power and geography. A participant in the affairs of the advanced industrial world, Turkey is also a developing country in many respects. She is a country of Moslems, and can help her allies understand and communicate with the Moslem world.

Until 1979, Turkey was a formal ally of Iran in CENTO. Turkey takes Iraqi oil from a major pipeline across the border and also shares with Iraq the problem of a sometimes restive Kurdish minority. Turkey is a member of the Islamic Conference which has been meeting in Saudi Arabia, and of its mediation team in the Iran-Iraq War.

In the Arab-Israel conflict, Turkey leans to what could be called pro-Arab neutrality.⁸ Turkey wants a lasting settlement and would like to see the problem disappear as a source of Arab disaffection with the United States. Turkey maintains diplomatic relations with Israel, but at a reduced level of representation.⁹

A long sequence of events in the strategic theater of Southwest Asia has highlighted Turkey's importance in the region. Current events in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon make it clear that the region's volatility will not subside in the near future. The West remains largely dependent on the region's oil resources and it is an area where the West could be outflanked politically, economically, and militarily. Without a strong and committed Turkey, Western interests in this region would be much more difficult to defend.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Relations between Turkey and her allies have been troubled by age-old legacies of ethnic strife and very contemporary doubts about who can rely on whom. These problems have been overcome in the past and they shall be overcome in the future.

Since 1923, the Turkish Republic has pursued a consistent course toward its twin objectives of national security and modernization. Progress has not always been smooth, but its records can be matched by few developing nations. The important thing is that solid foundations have been established in political, social, economic, and military areas.

The geographical location of Turkey dictates that it will be of strategic importance not only to Europe and NATO, but in the Middle East as well. In view of the world political situation, there is no reason to believe that tensions or potential crises areas will go away in the foreseeable future.

Turkey does maintain a large military establishment; however, effectiveness is questionable because of inadequate amounts and quality of equipment in all branches of the armed forces.

It is clearly in the best interest of the Western alliance that Turkey be militarily strong, economically and socially healthy, and politically stable under democratic institutions. At present, Turkey is

not in a position to manage all of the required tasks alone. Greater attention and increased resources should be devoted to Turkey in the future. Unlike many other countries in the world Turkey has proven that she is a dependable ally. Future relations between the United States and this strategic ally should be guided by the principals of consistency in foreign policy and adequate support to enhance both economic and military development.

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